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ABSTRACT

In Nevada, equity projects funded through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act and administered by the Nevada Department of Education provide program improvement, occupational preparation, training, resources, and activities designed to address the needs of all students. Although the emphasis has been on females, in particular single parents, displaced homemakers, and single pregnant women because of their profound need, all students benefit from participating in these programs and activities that prepare them to be a part of Nevada's diverse and changing society. In 1993-94, approximately $460,000 was awarded to programs in Nevada to provide services, comprehensive career guidance and counseling, and activities to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping in secondary and postsecondary occupational education. Major accomplishments include the following: (1) more than 400 single parents and displaced homemakers were trained in basic and occupational skills that will allow them to leave government subsidies for the job market; (2) more than 5,000 middle school and secondary youth now have increased awareness of career options that will lead to new and emerging occupational fields and technical occupations; (3) more than 1,000 educators will recognize gender bias in their classrooms, schools, or programs. Emphasis has also been placed in recruiting more nontraditional students into occupational education programs; progress has been made in achieving gender balance in these programs, but many programs are still stereo typically male or female, with most females enrolled in retail sales, clerical, and service occupational programs, leading to jobs that pay the lowest wages. (KC)

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HOPE

a VISION FOR NEVADA

equitable

OPPORTUNITY

fairness

FAIRNESS

options

choice

Nevada Department of Education
1994 Annual Report to the Community

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A VISION FOR NEVADA

TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES WHICH BUILD FAIRNESS IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. TO EXPAND ACADEMIC AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS IN A SAFE AND BIAS-FREE ENVIRONMENT.

Of all households headed by women, over one-half have incomes below poverty level.

WHY IS THIS VISION OF EQUITY IMPORTANT TO NEVADA?

The picture of America is changing—greater diversity among our citizens, different family structures, and more women in the workforce than ever before. These changes impact all of us, personally and as a society. Old notions of education and workforce preparation create inequities which lessen the ability of individuals to develop to their maximum capacity and diminish the ability of America to compete in an ever more global economy.

The following examples highlight the disparaging inequities which have been created through unintentional bias and stereotyping, be it sexual, ethnic, or disability-related.

- Of all households headed by women, over one-half have incomes below poverty level.
- 43% of all women are working in jobs that pay below poverty level wages ($11,000 for a family of four).
- 72% of African American female-headed households live in poverty.
- Women with disabilities had a mean income of $8,075 in 1987, compared with men with disabilities having a mean income of $15,797.
- 76% of all students, boys and girls, experience sexual harassment in school, creating a 'hostile environment' for many students.

Our educational system offers the best opportunity for changing these and other problems associated with the negative consequences of bias and stereotyping. By developing equitable learning environments and programs, Nevada's vision for equity can make the critical difference for individual lives, for the State, and for America.

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43% of all women are working in jobs that pay below poverty level wages ($11,000 for a family of four).

Equity projects funded through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act and administered by the Nevada Department of Education provide program improvement, occupational preparation, training, resources and activities designed to address the needs of all students. The emphasis has been focused on females, in particular single parents, displaced homemakers and single pregnant women. However, while these special groups were targeted for services because of profound need, all students benefit from participating in these programs and activities which prepare them to be a part of Nevada's diverse and changing society.

72% of African American female-headed households live in poverty.

The Nevada State Plan for Occupational Education identifies three major objectives:

1) To provide programs, services, comprehensive career guidance and counseling, and activities to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping in secondary and postsecondary occupational education.
2) To provide preparatory services and occupational education programs, services and activities for girls and women aged 14 through 25. These services provide information which will enable the participants to support themselves and their families.
3) To provide support services such as dependent care and transportation for the women participating in occupational education programs, services, and activities previously described.

"Nationally, nearly one-fourth of females said they dropped out of school due to pregnancy. Other reasons for dropping out include boredom, academic failure, health problems and family problems."

The following quotes are from statistics provided by *Nevada's Children: Selected Educational and Social Statistics Nevada and National*, compiled by Mary P. Horner, M.A.

- "Nationally, nearly one-fourth of females said they dropped out of school due to pregnancy. Other reasons for dropping out include boredom, academic failure, health problems and family problems." (NDHR-Health, 1991)
- "The number of births to Nevada teens increased by 20% between 1970 and 1988, compared with a 26% decrease nationwide. This was the 2nd largest increase in the nation." (Moore, 1991)
- "In 1988 and 1990, 12.5% of all babies were born in Nevada to teens." (NDHR-Health, 1992)

"In 1988 and 1990, 12.5% of all babies were born in Nevada to teens."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A significant impact was made in Nevada, in spite of the relatively small amount of money available for services. Approximately $460,000 was awarded through a competitive grant process to meet the objectives previously stated. Major accomplishments include:

- Over 400 single parents and displaced homemakers were trained in basic and occupational skills. Many of these women had been reliant on government subsidies and now have the skills that will lead to job placement, reducing or eliminating dependence on public assistance programs.
- Over 5,000 middle school and secondary youth now have increased awareness of career options that will lead to new and emerging occupational fields and technical occupations.
- Over 1,000 educators will recognize gender bias in their classrooms, schools or programs. Their new training provided them with strategies to eliminate that bias.

The amount of impact that this program has had on my life is much too much to put into one sentence...

TWO
2

SPECIFIC FUNDED SERVICES

SINGLE PARENTS, DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS, AND SINGLE PREGNANT WOMEN

In 1993-94, more than 410 single parents benefitted from services offered by the four community colleges in Nevada and 39 received services at the secondary level. This was accomplished with only $324,441 which was awarded to the four community colleges that house the Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Re-Entry Centers providing occupational training, basic skills education, career guidance and counseling, support services and work experience programs to eligible students demonstrating the greatest financial need. The average cost per participant for services was $790. With that small investment, many single parents and displaced homemakers have reduced or eliminated their dependency on social services, have increased their self-esteem, and have become increasingly self-sufficient.

"Being a single parent can be a hard job. The seminars that are offered and the support from the staff...helped me find a sense of pride in myself and regain some needed self-esteem." Linda Rasmus

"The amount of impact that this program has had in my life is much too much to put into one sentence. I will be grateful for the rest of my life for all the support, training, financing that this program provided for me." Dani Chandler

In addition, [illegible] students benefitted from the $9,000 awarded to the Educational Equity Resource Centers to provide services primarily for pregnant and parenting teens. Special presentations were made targeting rural youth and an 'in-house' program was established at one school with the goal of providing services to keep pregnant and parenting teens in school.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY SERVICES

Educational Equity Resource Centers were established at the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with funding of $138,772. The Educational Equity Resource Centers provide programs and presentations to increase student awareness of sex stereotyping and bias. These programs will increase awareness among students of the variety of career choices available to women and men by making them more aware of new and emerging occupational fields and technical occupations. The Educational Equity Resource Centers also provide technical assistance by providing training and resources in sex equity to Nevada's educators in secondary schools, and community colleges, and to community based organizations.

"When I entered the program I was a single mother on unemployment...I now work for the State of Nevada... my life was turned around in about one year's time." Lori Jarboe-Kreck

Without this program I would be on welfare and probably a drug addict or I would be dead. The work experience (component of the single parent program) turned into a paid position, which enabled me to quit ADC....I am currently working as program coordinator for New Careers for Women and several of my clients are single parents. I have made a full circle and I am able to give back what I received." Susan Brandon

During FY 1994, 5149 secondary and 313 postsecondary students benefitted from these services.

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PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Increased use of strategies and curriculum which enhance gender equity and reduce sex bias.
2. Increased awareness of the negative effects of sex stereotyping and bias on teaching and learning.
3. Increased contact with parents regarding current workforce realities and limiting effects of sex bias and stereotyping.
4. Increased use of career resources emphasizing non-traditional careers for students.
5. Increased awareness of the need to take more math, science and technology in secondary and postsecondary education.
6. More knowledge about apprenticeship programs for women.
7. Increased awareness of the effects and legal ramifications of sexual harassment.

"I noticed the girls were really enjoying themselves... they felt important and worthwhile."
Teacher

These results were accomplished by providing many activities to promote involvement of young men and women in non-traditional careers. Classroom presentations, conferences, role-models, and in-service/workshop presentations were made to students in teen pregnancy and parenting classes, gifted and talented programs, occupational and pre-occupational classes. Females, minorities, and students with disabilities were targeted for conference participation. Parents were also offered special classes and included in many conference activities.

CONFERENCES CONDUCTED INCLUDE:

Expanding Your Horizons
Expanding Your Horizons for Native American Girls
Expanding Your Horizons for Native American Boys
Academic Opportunities for Women
Multi-County Multi-Cultural Conference
Gender Equity Conference
Women of Color Conference

RESULTS

"I got to see some careers I never thought I would consider." Student

The following quotes are from students and teachers who participated in the conferences.

- "I got to see some careers I never thought I would consider." Student
- "This program made me realize that I can reach my goals, succeed in life, and make my dreams come true." Student
- "I noticed the girls were really enjoying themselves....they felt important and worthwhile." Teacher

"This program made me realize that I can reach my goals, succeed in life, and make my dreams come true." Student

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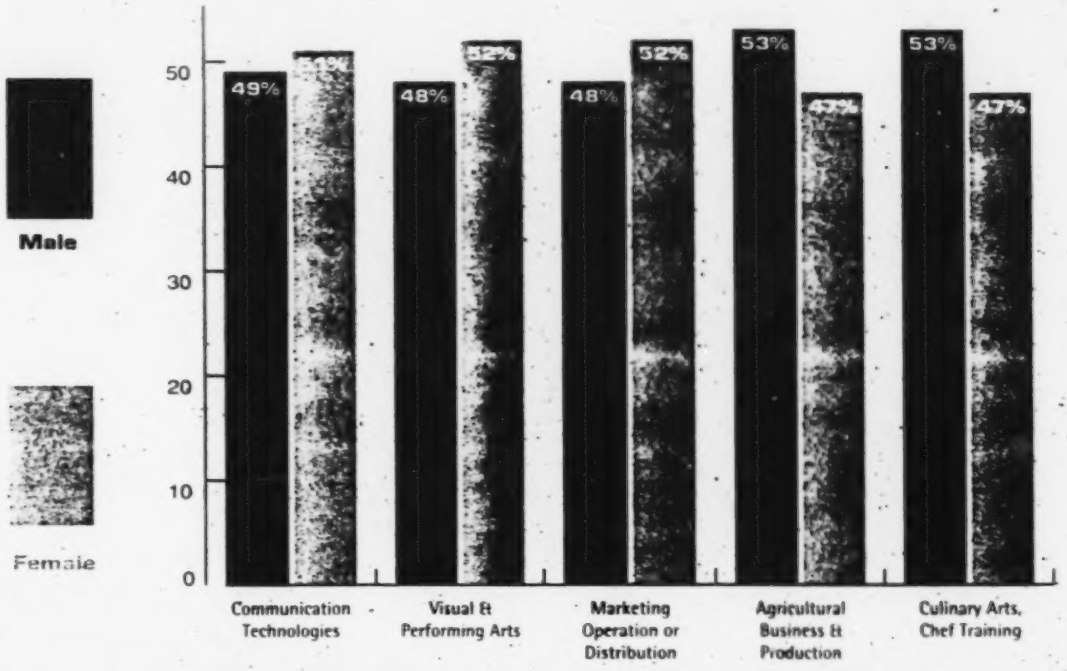
STATISTICAL REFLECTION OF NEVADA

A snapshot of equity progress and needs can be seen by reviewing statistical information from program enrollments and staffing. The following information is provided from two sources, both developed and published by the Nevada Department of Education's Planning, Research, and Evaluation Branch.

Indicators of Science and Mathematics Education in Nevada, 1991-92

Occupational Reporting System Report for Nevada, 1993-94

Gender-balanced occupational programs are defined as programs with more than 25 percent representation of a single sex. Occupational enrollment rates and staffing levels are continually assessed and evaluated to measure the state's achievement of gender equity.



GENDER BALANCED OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS

Many of today's occupational programs are gender-balanced providing preparation for the workplace and equal wage opportunities for males and females.

Our goal for equity in Nevada's secondary schools in occupational, math, and science class enrollments is a relatively equal distribution of males, females and special population students in percentages similar to their mainstream populations. Achieving this goal would assure that biases stemming from gender, ethnicity, class or disability are effectively combatted.

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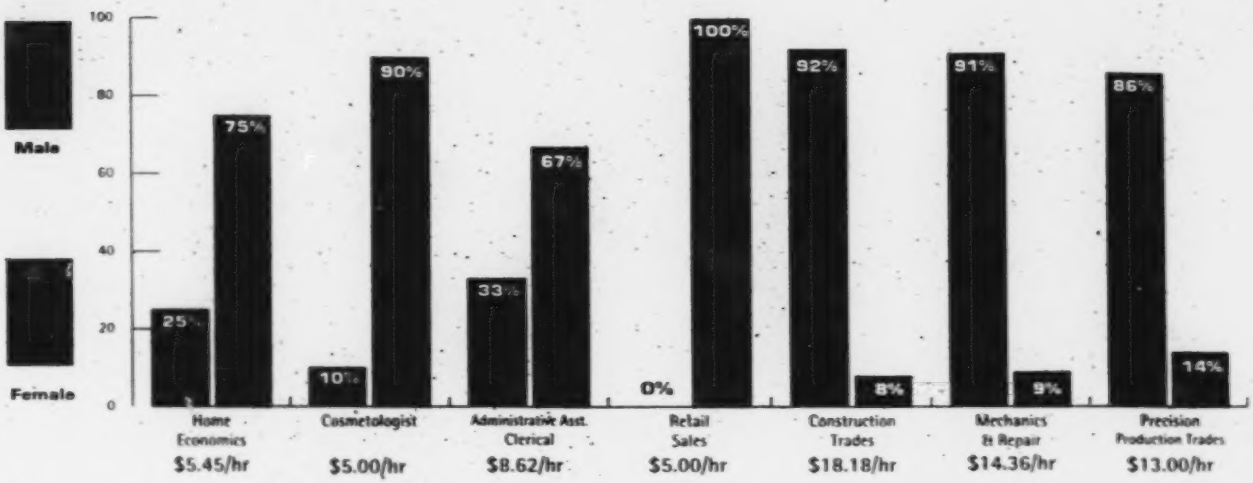
Unfortunately, despite our efforts, not all occupational classes are gender-balanced. Many of the traditionally stereotyped classes such as home economics, mechanics, and precision production have the largest gender imbalance of all classes.



OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH GENDER DISPARITY

The graph shows the continuing disparity between male and female stereotyped occupations. It is clear that the fields traditionally filled by males offer greater opportunity for earning potential than those traditionally filled by women. The impact of this stereotypical enrollment serves to perpetuate limited income opportunities for women, and a limited labor pool in some occupations such as the construction trades. By not encouraging women to enroll in high skill, high wage occupational programs which will increase their earning potential, households headed by women will continue to subsist at low income levels. This, in turn, perpetuates the societal problems associated with poverty.

"Out of 441 occupational areas, 80% of all women work in four of those areas - retail sales, clerical, service, and assemblers."

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For females and minority males, sex and ethnic bias often lead to smaller enrollments in math and science classes. Lack of attendance in these critical classes eliminates over 65% of career opportunities for these students, limiting them to low-paying jobs as adults and limited career choices. Consequently, math and science enrollment figures help determine the extent to which females and other minority groups are aware of and encouraged to participate in these critical subjects.

Significant progress has been made in Nevada toward improving female enrollments in math and science classes, but we have a long way to go. Many of the equity projects have involved collaboration with other entities that are also working to improve participation in math and science courses through student awareness and motivation, teaching methods, assessment strategies and establishment of standards for math and science courses. For example, the Nevada EQUALS Program is a collaborative arrangement between the EERC at UNLV and the Eisenhower Mathematics and Science funds. This program trains teachers to encourage all students, particularly women and minorities to succeed in mathematics and science. The teachers learn practices and methods of teaching mathematics that build confidence in students by addressing the fears they may experience, such as math anxiety, and eliminating it.

POSITIVE SIGNS INCLUDE:

- increased use of hands-on, cooperative learning strategies which enhance learning for females and other underrepresented groups.
- increased use of applied academic curriculum and dual-credit academic/occupational classes which enhance relevance of coursework for students.
- increased efforts toward utilizing female role-models in math and science careers as mentors and motivators for students.

PROGRESS

TEACHER'S COMMENTS:

- "This training will help me be more aware of different learning styles in my classroom."
- "I plan to use it to enrich my students learning."
- "I became more motivated to see myself as competent in math."
- "It opened my mind to different ways of thinking about math."

"It has opened my mind to different ways of thinking about math."

"This training will help me be more aware of different learning styles in my classroom."

"I plan to use it to enrich my students learning."

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A BRIGHT FUTURE

The State of Nevada has progressed in providing effective services and programs for it's educators and students in spite of extremely limited funds. To maximize the funds provided, we creatively involved efforts and planning with other state agencies and local organizations such as Eisenhower Math-Science Programs, State Job Training Office, the Department of Human Resources, Cooperative Extension, AAUW, Soroptimists International and private businesses.

In spite of the progress that has been made, more must be done to incorporate these issues into the very fiber of our educational system so these programs do not have to stand apart. Excellence in education will only be achieved when all students have access, acceptance and success in their chosen occupational path—a path chosen with realistic and unbiased information.

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Nevada State Board for Occupational Education
1995-1996

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